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THE ART REVIEW.

which will be hailed with acclamations of intense delight by their respective partisans. It is easy to see, from these autographs, that the characters of two men are as diverse as the poles. In both we see the wear and tear of service; the former from signing appointments and commissions, the latter from much franking of speeches. But it is plain to see, through all, that the hand that faced the upper signature could no more write the nether name, than the writer of the nether could delineate the upper handwriting.

Let us turn from scenes of strife to more congenial objects. Let us scan, for a moment, the chirographic symbol of

Mark Twain.

The ineffable humor of this genius crops out at every turn of the pen. Indeed it is doubtful whether the pen had any share in tracing that signature; whether the writer did not, on the impulse of a queer freak, seize a toothpick or a carving-knife for the purpose. The simple perusal of the autograph—the quaint solemnity of the *M*; the faro-comic structure of the *ark*; the ambiguous aspect of the *T*; and the curiously composite architecture of the *wain*—convulse the reader with laughter; while the irresistible quirk in the tail of the *n* leaves him in a spasm of cachinnation, from which he is glad to be aroused to contemplate the ad signature of

L. A. Bonaparte.

The lately deposed tyrant of the Tuilleries. This autograph has been forwarded to me by cable, at expense. I have barely time to refer to it briefly. It speaks for itself; though traced under a cloud, it still has the dignity of royalty about it, and is done with a grace which shows that, with this monarch, the pen is mightier than the sword. The history of Gravelotte and Sedan go to confirm this, so far as the weakness of the sword is concerned.

As a curiosity, I will give you the autograph of

Casalianaca,

which I have had long sinouidering in my portfolio. This is the unfortunate boy who

“——Stood on the burning deck

Whence all but him had fled.”

What is peculiar about this is the absolute perpendicularity of the letters—a fact that is not to be wondered at when we reflect that the noble boy never sloped.

Next comes that stalwart warrior of the plains, General Spotted Tail. Observe the simple lines of his sign-manual:

Spotted Tail.

Short, sharp and decisive, like his campaigns. I have often heard this noble warrior remark that he would rather shoot nine buffalo, or scalp six pale-faces, than write his name once. And his death furnished a melancholy and instructive fact, showing that everything breaks in its weakest spot. *I had from writing his name.* Spotted Tail had annexed that elegant specimen fist of his to an IOU, held by a strong warrior of his own tribe. Being unable to liquidate the claim, the creditor drew on him at sight; that is, he drew a rifle and drew a bead on the noble chief. That was Red Hatchet's idea of “drawing at sight.” It proved

fatal to Spotted Tail, and he never panned that wonderful autograph more.

Let his example remain a warning to his civilized fellow Americans, while I append to this hasty sketch an autograph which many will recognize with sadness—particularly my grocer, butcher and landlord—as that of

Yours truly,

P. Green.

OUR PAINTERS IN EUROPE.

HAVE WE AN AMERICAN SCHOOL OF PAINTING?—ITS PROSPECTS.—THE MASTER.

JAMES JACKSON JARVES.

France refuses to acknowledge that England has yet attained the distinction of founding a national school of painting. Her eminent critics seldom find anything they consider as worthy of serious notice in the art of her rival. Even in the cosmopolitan Louvre galleries, which seek to gather together the fine art of the world, no place, as yet, has been found for English painters. So much the worse for France, we believe, because if England be behind her in the science of art, its technical accomplishments, she is infinitely her superior in its morality and sympathy with nature. Turner and Hogarth alone are names not to be approached in their respective spheres by any painters of France. But this conceit of Gallic superiority has nothing directly to do with America, except so far as to convince our artists that they can have no hope of European recognition as a school, until they have achieved a positive reputation on a broad basis of national motives, local feelings, and noteworthy facts, wrought into artistic perfection through a thorough knowledge of those technical means and resources of art which form the superiority of French painting, just as in the literature of France style is its most attractive and prominent feature. In both, perhaps, exception might be taken on this point. Too much attention is given, as a whole, to style, in comparison with thought. But in America the reverse is nearer the truth.

We may as well confess in the outset that we have no actual school of painting, at least none that England, any more than France, would absolutely recognize as one. Our sculpture, in mass, is ahead of our painting. One reason of this is that in Europe there does not exist, at the present moment, a single national school of sculpture worthy of comparison with its past efforts. Sculpture everywhere is in a low condition of paltry realism or weak sentimentalism, falling almost into the phase of mechanical manufacture of ideal statues and *genre* common-places. America spends so lavishly for sculptural dainties and sturdy, homely portraiture, that she is fast founding a school of sculpture which obtains recognition in Europe, because the standard is universally low, rather than on account of any special superiority of its own. As there are earnest workers among our sculptors, we may expect something better to grow out of its present condition whenever our museums and schools of art afford them sufficient means of instruction and stimulus to exertion.

Painting is less homogeneous in results. There is no more superficiality and pretension in it than

in its sister art, as now practiced. But it is infinitely more varied in motives, expression, scope, and fulfillment. America has not yet produced a painter capable of creating a school, or leaving a decided impression on the common mind, as Franklin has in practical science, or even Longfellow, in poetry. Until such an one comes to the surface, our æsthetic efforts will be isolated and varying, making, perhaps, some technical progress from generation to generation, and slowly raising the general standard and appreciation, but acquiring for us no emphatic position in the fine arts of the world. And this is what we are now doing. As with sculpture, we began our æsthetic career in painting, with a few names, whose understanding and feeling of art were in advance of their power of execution. It is only sufficient to name Allston, Cole, Trumbull, and Sully, to confirm this assertion. While much scientific progress has been made since their time, there has been no gain in the spirit or comprehension of art. Landscape is still the popular theme. Durand and others practiced their art in a dry, mechanical, literal manner, which soon became as tiresome as tea-tray decoration. Then came on the stage our great spectacular landscapists, of the Bierstadt class, who for a time won the popular favor, and almost persuaded people that their scenic, shallow compositions, were a likeness of nature. But although shams abound in America, they are not long lived. Another and truer order of artists coming after, exposed their fallacies and pretence. I shall name only a few as examples, on whom the hope of forming an American school actually rests, as types of the right sort of study and style. There are two classes of these landscapists: those in whom the sentiment of color predominates, and those whose expression is rather in design, though giving color its due weight in composition. Among the former, La Farge and Innes, now in Rome, are especially conspicuous for an intense idealism, the former bringing to the surface the inward life, or an introspective insight into the proper sentiment of the object, and the latter delighting the eye with a full symphony of richest effects of nature's material aspects in masses of rich, warm color. But the style of the artist of this turn of pencil is more or less one-sided, and strongly tintured with the individualism of the man. Indeed, it appeals to us more by this quality than by its purely artistic capacity. This latter is better represented by men of equally strong individuality, but who concentrate their strength on representing nature exactly as she appears under her best guises, independent of any emotions or idiosyncrasies of their own minds reflected through the chosen facts, other than a fine taste and sympathy in choice, and a nice detective power in extracting nature's best moods.

There was recently a landscapist, who lived eight years in obscurity in Rome, often so pinched by poverty as to be on the verge of starvation. He was an uncompromising, independent thinker, of clear eye and judgment, solitary, and abiding his time, determined not to disclose himself until he had acquired the skill in reproducing the facts and effects he coveted, the while slowly but surely forming a sound style of landscape art, of great beauty, power, and truth, resplendent with the subtle harmonies of nature and variety in unity of her forms and tints; a man who would have

placed himself, with only a little more study and practice, not only at the head of all our landscapists, but been second to none in Europe, had he not died a year ago, just as the few finished paintings and numerous sketches had given evidence to the few amateurs to whose judgment he chose to submit them, of his great ability. This man was T. H. Hotchkiss, of New York State. Had he lived to complete his career of conscientious study, he would have become the much-needed "master," competent to found an American school of landscape, on a solid basis of faithful, realistic observation of nature, and rare capacity of execution. As it is, his studies and pictures ought to be gathered into our museums of art, as rare means of instruction and examples, such as no foreign, modern examples can excel. Hotchkiss was as modest as he was laborious, unsparing of labor, valuing truth and honesty above all else, hating artistic pretence and shams, scorning meanness of every kind, avoiding society, because of its beguilements from work, persisting in his isolation until he found himself on the brink of fame and fortune, only to die from a chronic disease induced by the hardships and privations of his earlier life. An orphan boy, of a delicate frame, he first earned his bread as a common laborer in a brick yard, in Genesee county, New York, at the rate of a dollar a day. A chance acquaintance seeing his desire to paint something, obtained him a place with a sign and house painter, with whom, in a few weeks, he painted his first picture, upon a piece of cotton cloth on a board. This attempt showed the same spirit of fidelity to local facts, and exactness of drawing, which afterward became so conspicuous. There is more of value to our incipient school in the sad history and interrupted destiny of this youthful martyr to art, than in the entire careers of scores of so-called successful artists, whose names are foisted on the public by dint of shallow puffery. A good sketch of Hotchkiss, and he left a full portfolio, whether as fine art or a faithful retrospect of nature, is of far more importance in directing the public taste than scores of "Hearts of the Andes," or "Rocky Mountains." It is, therefore, with real satisfaction that I see some of our younger artists following in his footsteps, and emulous of his genius. Among these I will mention Henry R. Newman, also of New York, now in Florence, working in water colors, on the same earnest, genuine system, and with the like feeling for the truths of nature as Hotchkiss; while Tilton, of Rome, whose work hitherto has been on a different basis, is, I am told, going over to the Hotchkiss method, though it is a hopeless effort in most men to attempt to rival his straight-forward, vigorous touch and intense, luminous color, as frank as daylight itself, and as free of artistic chicanery.

Elihu Vedder, now in Rome, is another of our rising artists, whose executive thoroughness and force, vigor and variety of motives, poetical, mystical, and illustrative of the mysterious action of mind, occult forces of nature, and weirdness of aspects, deserves to be more fully tested by those who take an interest in forming a distinctive American school of painting than they have hitherto been. Vedder is probably better appreciated in London than New York, on account of the intellectuality of his motives in general. His style

is firm, color forcible and clear, harmonizing with the feeling of his motives, and his technical knowledge more scientifically exact, than it is customary to see in the majority of his fellow artists. George Mignat, of Florence, has just painted an Italian *genre* picture, bought by Mr. Barney, of New York, which merits the attention of our connoisseurs, as combining much of the Meissonier truth of design and characterization, with a broader and more efficacious treatment; on the whole, excellent modeling, skillful grouping, and genuine work, such as Eastman Johnson himself might not disdain. The subject is simple—a Franciscan monk standing by a wall, reading a letter brought by a peasant boy, attended by two other children, awaiting his reply—a singularly happy and effective out-door study.

I might speak of the tender sentiment of Bough-ton, the accurate finish of C. C. Colman, and the startling surprises of color of Whistler, in London, borrowed from his Japanese experiences, but in speaking at all of American painting, in a large national sense, out of the common routine abroad, it must be general, either anticipatory and hopeful on account of individual signs, rather than complete evidence of promise, or with disappointment, as in the brightest case of all, that of Hotchkiss, who seemed born to take American landscape painting out of its fictitious, inane complacency, and lift it into the vigorous atmosphere of truth and real beauty, but who was cut down just as the credentials of his great mission were being verified. It is to be hoped that his courage, resolution, skill, and judgment, will not perish with him, for if they do the development of our schools of painting may be thrown back another generation.

AMERICAN ART LITERATURE.

SPIRIT OF OUR ART WRITERS.

WARD'S STATUE OF SHAKSPEARE.

The critic of the New York *Tribune* gives an extended and thoroughly flattering notice of this new and important work:

"Mr. J. Q. A. Ward's colossal statue of Shakespeare, destined to stand, when cast in bronze, in the Central Park, was lately exhibited to the public, at the artist's studio. The work has engaged the artist's best thought for nearly five years. The first sketch in miniature, was made in 1866. The present statue was set up in clay about eighteen months ago, and is, in all essential respects, of course, an enlargement and completion of the sketch which was presented to the committee who undertook the erection of the statue, and which met with their approval.

"It is of noble proportions and bearing. Ward's Shakespeare is no pale, thin-blooded, slender-limbed man of mind, wasted by the action of thought, but a sturdy, robust frame, broad-shouldered and firmly knit. He stands well on his feet, and easily, as if it was no fatigue to stand. His limbs are strongly modeled, like those of a man who walks abroad in the world of nature and society, and finds himself more at home in the street than in the library. A volume in the right hand indicates his calling as a man of letters; his left arm placed a-kinlo, gives an air of leisurely meditation. So those naturally stand who are intending their minds."

"Mr. Ward's conception of Shakespeare, and it is a legitimate, perhaps the only just conception of him, is evidently that of a 'man of the world,' in the best sense that can be given to that abused term. That is to say, a man who is no recluse,

no idealist, no dreamer, no speculative philosopher who constructs the universe out of materials that are extant in the depths of his consciousness, but a man who lives in the world, observes it, studies it, reflects on it, takes it just as it is, and tries to get at the moral laws that make it go on. He is first of all an observer; no theorist, no theologian, no scholastic philosopher, no preacher, no moralist, no apologist or accuser of mankind; but a creature endowed with extraordinary powers of impartial discernment; a healthy person, therefore, well organized and equipped for practical emergencies, at home in all scenes, and hospitable to all characters. The power of this frame speaks of endurance, of participation in the affairs of common life; the elegance of it tells of familiarity with people of culture. He is not awkward. He has no thought of his clothes.

"Some will be surprised at the apparent youthfulness of the figure, and will judge it to be a mistake that so few traces of thought are indicated in the lines of the face. But this, too, may be explained on the theory just mentioned. The men whose faces are marked with furrows and hollows by intense thinking, are men whose thinking is speculative and interior. Metaphysicians, theologians, students, who pass their days in libraries and burn the midnight lamp, such have the dim eye, the sunken cheek, the skin-like parchment. But the man whose mind, however active, works in sympathy with mankind and in harmony with nature, may put forth prodigious intellectual efforts and still preserve an unworn look. This Shakespeare is clearly a man of thought; literally a thinking man, and not a thinking brain merely. He thinks all over. The head is large, fully developed, a magnificent dome of mind, but it is not in the least out of proportion with the frame; indeed, at the first glance, it looks too small. It is a live head placed on live shoulders. He is presented as what the old Bible calls 'a living soul.'

"And this brings us directly to the head and face, which are sure to be the most commented on and criticised. These were the points that presented to the sculptor any peculiar difficulty. It is unnecessary to say that the difficulty was fairly faced, duly estimated, and met with patient consideration, careful judgment, and a most faithful use of all the existing means for arriving at sound conclusions. No portrait of Shakespeare commands such entire confidence that the artist would have been justified in copying it. While all have certain points in common, they differ from one another in incidental and in some cardinal respects. No one of them is entitled to authoritative pre-eminence before the others. They may all be genuine, and yet all be untrue.

"Not in the spirit of barren eclecticism which picks out a good point here and another there, and then pieces them together, but with the fidelity of a keen analyst who would extract from all the essential qualities they had in common, the artist endeavored to do justice to all the portraits, to present a probable Shakespeare, to express his own idea of the man, and to meet the demand for a likeness which all beholders might acknowledge. Not that he was conscious of having these separate aims before him as he worked; in that case his process would have been that of artificial selection and combination. His aim was truth, and he felt that the best way to arrive at comprehensive truth which would satisfy the largest number of conditions was through a method which admitted the probability that each portrait was a more or less correct picture of the poet, and that each must have some essential features in common with all the rest.

"As a work of plastic art this last production of Mr. Ward's genius is, in some respects, the finest, as we shall see when the bronze casting placed in the Central Park is exposed to the broad daylight, and the fine modeling which the shadows of the studio concealed, comes out distinctly.

"Only those who have looked in to the problem of Shakespearean portraiture enough to become acquainted with its difficulties can judge to what extent the finer intellectual qualities were brought into actual exercise in this instance. To the unskilled